



Indian Interference in the Internal Affairs of Tamil Nadu

|Thanjai Nalankilli

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edited by
Thanjai Nalankilli

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Preface

Tamil Nadu has more land area, population, resources and industrial base than over half the countries in the world. Tamil Nadu population is higher than 80% of the countries. Yet Indian government is not allowing Tamil Nadu to manage its own affairs. It interferes everywhere and makes life more difficult for the people of the state.

In this book we discuss the variety of ways Indian Government is interfering in our internal affairs. We discuss here only a few examples. What right Hindi politicians have to tell our state government what to do and how to do things in the state? This should end. We are not vassals to Hindi politicians. We want to be masters in our own land.

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1. Why Some State Governments Demand Devolution of Power in the Industrial Sector: Four Examples from Tamil Nadu

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: March 2016]

OUTLINE

Abbreviations

1. Introduction
2. Nokia Plant Closure and Job Loss in Tamil Nadu
3. Cotton for Tamil Nadu Textile Mills
4. Goods and Services Tax (GST) and Revenue Loss
5. Cable TV Distribution in Tamil Nadu Cities

Abbreviations

AIADMK - All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

DAS - Digital Addressable System

GOI - Government of India

GST - Goods and Services Tax

SIMA - Southern India Mills' Association

TNACTCL - Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable TV Corporation Limited

1. Introduction

The list provided in this article is only a sample of four events from 2015 illustrating the need for devolving more power to states in the industrial sector. The four example are from Tamil Nadu because the author is from Tamil Nadu and knows more about the situation in Tamil Nadu. Similar events take place year after year and Indian government is turning a deaf ear to demands for devolution of power to states. States further away from the Hindi states, such as the eastern and southern states, are particularly affected because the Hindi politicians who dominate the Indian central government do not know about or care much about the culture or socio-economic realities of these states.

2. Nokia Plant Closure and Job Loss in Tamil Nadu

Indian Government income tax department freezing Nokia assets results in 30000 job loss in Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu State also had tax claim; it reduced the tax from 2400 crore Rupees to 912 crore Rupees in order to protect jobs. Tamil Nadu State Government asked Indian government to unfreeze the assets and India did not. (Business Standard; February 9, 2015) Unfreezing the assets would pave way for other companies to acquire

the factory and operate it thus eliminating or reducing job loss. Eventually some other company may open the factory and at least some of the jobs may be recovered but in the meantime it is unwanted hardship on 30000 Tamil Nadu workers. This is one reason we want financial and industrial devolution. State government is from the local soil and is sensitive to the ground situation and needs of local workers. The Indian government from hundreds of kilometres away is neither sensitive nor really care about job loss in a far away state.

2. Cotton for Tamil Nadu Textile Mills

Tamil Nadu does not produce enough cotton for the textile mills in the state. So the mills have to buy and bring cotton from other states. Cost of shipping a bale of cotton from Gujarat to Tamil Nadu mills using Indian ships is Rs. 672 but it is only Rs. 433 from West Africa to Tamil Nadu using foreign ships. This excessive cost is due to restrictions and duties imposed by the Indian government. Southern India Mills' Association (SIMA) asked the Indian government rectify the situation (The Hindu Newspaper; February 21, 2015). Indian government has not rectified the situation as of the time of this writing. In due course the situation may be rectified but in the meantime not only textile mill owners but also textile workers suffer. State government understands and empathizes such hardships better and thus takes action quickly, unlike the officials in faraway New Delhi who take their time to correct the situation, if at all. This is one reason we request devolution of power on industry matters to state governments.

3. Goods and Services Tax and Revenue Loss

AIADMK Member of Parliament K. Gopal said that Goods and Services Tax (GST) Bill would cause revenue loss to TN and AIADMK would not support it. He added that GST is likely to cause huge losses to manufacturing and net exporting states like Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa has already expressed concern about the impact of GST on fiscal autonomy of states. (NDTV Website; November 27, 2015) (AIADMK - All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam; a major political party in Tamil Nadu)

4. Cable TV Distribution in Tamil Nadu Cities

Tamil Nadu State Government-owned Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable TV Corporation Limited (TNACTCL) has been transmitting TV signals in TN for many years. It applied for digital distribution (DAS - Digital Addressable System; this is a newer, better technology). in 2012 and Government of India (GOI) is procrastinating even though it gave permission to 326 private companies during that time. GOI ordered that TNACTCL cannot distribute signals in cities like Chennai unless it is DAS. Since GOI has not granted TNACTCL permission, signals will be cut off on December 31, 2015 per GOI order. So TNACTCL petitioned HC and HC ordered that it may transmit signals until it makes a decision. (The New Indian express; December 22, 2015), (Thinathanthi; December 22, 2015). If Tamil Nadu Government owned cable TV distribution were to end in Chennai and other cities, private companies may raise the price of cable TV subscription.

But for the High Court decision, TACTV service would have ended in major Tamil Nadu cities. Why do we have to run to the high court to end heavy-handed actions of the Indian government? Power over Cable TV should rest with state governments. Our elected state government knows what is good for our people. We do not want politicians from New Delhi making decisions.

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2. Out-of-State IAS and IPS Officers in Tamil Nadu

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: August 2013; Updated: September 2020]

ABBREVIATIONS

IAS - Indian Administrative Service

IPS - Indian Police Service

So many senior officers in State Government jobs are from other states. Indian government requires that. It should change. All state government employees should be from the state. All central government employees should also be from within the state where they serve.

Of the 355 IAS officers in Tamil Nadu State only 170 are from Tamil Nadu. Of the 259 IPS officers in Tamil Nadu State only 108 are from Tamil Nadu (as of May 2012).

IAS and IPS officers are selected on the basis of India-wide competitive examinations. IAS officers hold high-level administrative posts in both central and state governments (for example, in the state government, they are appointed secretaries to state government ministers, district collectors, etc.) and IPS officers hold high-level posts at central and state law enforcement agencies (for example, Director General of Police, Superintendent of Police, etc.).

Instead of appointing IAS and IPS officers from within the state, Indian Government purposively posts large numbers of out-of-state officers. This is a calculated move by the Indian Government to destroy the linguistic identity of states and to **prevent state language becoming the state official language in practice** because the out-of-state officers do not have proficiency to conduct their work in the state language. (Yes, a quick training is often given in the state language but these officers cannot hold meaningful conversations with their superiors or subordinates in the state language or write a letter in the state language. But all these officers should be proficient in Hindi even if working in non-Hindi states.) We want all IAS and IPS officers be from the state and proficient in the state language. Only then the state language can become truly the official language of the state.

It is not just knowledge of the state language, **there is more to posting IAS and IPS officers from other states**. They do not know the customs, cultures, heritage and history of the people they are supposed to serve. We want to be policed by our brothers and sisters, not by somebody from 1000 kilometres away.

Here is an example. Ms. Kani Mozhi (Kanimozhi), a Member of Parliament (MP) from Tamil Nadu, went to Chennai Airport (located in Tamil Nadu) to fly to New Delhi. An

officer of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) that is responsible for guarding airports came to her and told her something in Hindi. When Ms. Kanimozhi told her that she does not understand Hindi, the officer asked her in English, "Are you an Indian?" (Thina Thanthi; August 10, 2020). [This CISF officer is not the only one. Similar incidents have been reported in Mumbai and Delhi Airports also in the past--immigration/visa officers questioning if a traveler is Indian because they did not understand Hindi.]

What if there is a major Anti-Hindi-Imposition Agitation again in Tamil Nadu, similar to 1965, how would this CISF officer or some other similar-minded Hindi police officer act? To such similar-minded police officers, these agitators are non-Indians and should be dealt with severely. If the elected chief minister of Tamil Nadu orders, "no shooting of our children (these young protesters are our sons and daughters)", will they obey? Or, treat the chief minister, who may not know Hindi, as a non-Indian?

We want all state government employees to be from within the state. I know CISF is under Indian central government. Our position is that all central government employees should also be from within the state where they serve. There is no need for outsiders.

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3. India, Tamil Nadu and Dr. Ambedkar Law University

P. V. Velu
Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: September 2009; Updated: October 2018]

OUTLINE

1. Dr. Ambedkar Law University
2. Central Government Grants and Scholarships

1. Dr. Ambedkar Law University

Tamil Nadu State Government wants to move Dr. Ambedkar Law University to a new location. It is waiting for over a year to get University Grants Commission's (UGC) approval. UGC is yet to send an expert committee to visit the new site and give its approval or disapproval.

Why do we need the approval from New Delhi to do anything important in Tamil Nadu? Why do we have to wait for an expert committee from a thousand kilometres away in New Delhi to visit the site and give approval? Why can't the government of Tamilnadu, representing 60 million people, appoint an expert committee to decide on the location of our law college? Are we stupid or incompetent to decide whether a site is suitable for a law university? Tamil Nadu state is bigger than half the countries in the world, has more population than half the countries in the world and has more gross domestic product (GDP) than half the countries in the world. We have an outstanding educational system. Yet we have to wait for approval from New Delhi for anything important. They delay and delay and in the meantime cost of construction goes up and up, as we wait and wait.

2. Central Government Grants and Scholarships

After the original publication of this article, a professor from Madurai commented, "University Grants Commission (UGC) has every reason to dictate to the state government where Dr. Ambedkar Law University should be relocated because they are partially or fully funding the relocation costs."

Yes, University Grants Commission (UGC) is funding the relocation of the university, but with whose money? The money comes from Indian government treasury, and the Indian government treasury gets the money from taxes collected from all over India including Tamilnadu. In fact, Tamil Nadu pays more in Indian government taxes per person than the Hindi states; also it gets back less money per person from Indian government than Hindi states (even after allowing for general expenditures like military, foreign ministry, etc.) So UGC is actually getting the money from Tamil Nadu and giving

part of the money back to Tamil Nadu for projects such as "Dr. Ambedkar Law University relocation". In the process of giving back part of our own tax monies, UGC as well as other Indian government institutions, dictates to us what to do and treats us as if we are incompetents. If Tamil people can earn the money and pay taxes to fund UGC, Tamil people (through their state government) can also decide where to locate our universities, colleges, irrigation projects, power plants, etc. We do not need some organization from over a thousand kilometres away to come and tell us what to do.

Some years ago, as a college student, one of the authors had a discussion with a friend about Indian government interfering in the internal affairs of the state of Tamil Nadu. My friend who received a central government scholarship (like many of us) said, "Without the scholarship I could never attend college." Where does funds for these central government scholarships come? From taxes paid by people from every state including Tamil Nadu. Indian government collects the taxes from us and sends back some of the money in the form of scholarships, fiscal grants etc. If Indian government allows Tamil Nadu government to collect the taxes and spend that in Tamil Nadu, **more students would be getting scholarships**. It is our taxes that is funding the central scholarships. We are not getting any money from Hindi states.

Here are some numbers from Reference 1. For every 100 Rupees Indian government collects in taxes from Tamil Nadu, only 35 Rupees is given back to Tamil Nadu in the form of scholarships, financial grants, central government projects, etc. In comparison, for every 100 Rupees Indian government collects in taxes from the Hindi state of Madhya Pradesh, 75 Rupees is given back to Tamil Nadu in the form of scholarships, financial grants, central government projects, etc. Hindi state of Uttar Pradesh gets even more; it gets 176 Rupees for every 100 Rupees it pays in Indian government taxes. Do you how much the non-Hindi state of Kerala gets back for every 100 Rupees it pays in Indian taxes? Just 25 Rupees.

Under these circumstances, what right the Indian government dominated by Hindi politicians has to dictate us where to locate our universities or how to select medical college students? Tamil Nadu State government can and should run our educational institutions without any interference from Indian government. **What is needed is complete devolution of "education" to state governments**. Indian government from over a thousand kilometres should have no control over our educational system or institutions.

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4. Indian Government Takeover of Tamil Nadu Temples and Historical Sites

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: December 2002]

Abbreviations

AIADMK - All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

ASI - Archeological Survey of India

DMK - Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

MDMK - Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

PMK - Pattali Makkal Katchi

The legendary Tamil King Raja Raja Cholan built the famous temple **Thanjai Peria Koil** (Tanjore Big Temple or Thanjavoor Peria Koil) over one thousand years ago. Indian Government took over the temple saying that it could better maintain this famous temple. Then it made unilateral decisions about the temple giving no heed to the wishes of the Tamil Nadu State Government. It would not allow Tamil Nadu government to install a statue of King Raja Raja Cholan in temple grounds (we did not request the statue inside the temple but outside the temple in the temple grounds) [Chapter 5].

Indian government also took over the **Gangai Konda Chola Puram Temple** built by Raja Rajan's son Rajendra Cholan. One change it made was to remove Tamil signs and boards and replace Tamil with Hindi [Section 4; Chapter 5]. There is no Tamil in on the grounds of the famous temple built by a Tamil king but there is Hindi from a thousand miles away.

Now, in 2002, the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) (controlled by the Indian Government) decided to take over the centuries-old **Tiruvannamalai Temple** (Sri Arunachaleswara Temple). They did not even have the courtesy to inform the Tamil Nadu Government of their intention.

Tamil Nadu Government had filed a lawsuit against the takeover. Tiruvannamalai Municipal Council passed a resolution opposing the takeover. The newly formed Arunachaleswara Temple Protection Committee organized a one-day strike on November 6, 2002 to express local people's opposition. All businesses in the town closed and local people took out a protest march. Major Tamil Nadu political parties including the AIADMK (the ruling party in Tamil Nadu), DMK, PMK and MDMK have expressed their opposition to the takeover. We thank them all.

Tamil temples and historical sites should be managed by the Tamil Nadu Government. We oppose the takeover by Indian Government because the Indian

Government buries the uniqueness of Tamil culture, religious heritage and history. Instead of taking over Tamil Nadu's cultural and religious sites, the Indian Government should devolve funds to the Tamil Nadu Government so it may care for them and manage them. We want the Indian Government to hand over all the temples it took over in Tamil Nadu back to the Tamil Nadu Government immediately.

UPDATE: Seeing people's protests and Tamil Nadu Government's legal action, Archeological Survey of India decided to give the temple back to Tamil Nadu Government jurisdiction. These ancient temples are the pride and joy of Tamil Nadu. Why do we have to waste our time to engage in protests and lawsuits to prevent a government that is located 1000 miles away taking them under its control? Indian government should give the necessary funds (from taxes it collects in Tamil Nadu) to Tamil Nadu government to maintain and care for these temples instead of taking control of them. These are our temples built by our ancestors with our money.

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5. Why is King Raja Raja Cholan Statue Standing outside the Thanjai Big Temple?

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: April 2001; Updated; June 2018]

Outline

1. Background
2. A Brief Biography of King Raja Raja Cholan
3. The Reason Why Raja Raja Cholan Statue is Outside Temple Grounds?
4. Where is Tamil in the Gangai Konda Chola Puram Temple?
5. Update

1. Background

King Raja Raja Cholan built the Thanjai Big Temple (also referred to as Thanjavur Peria Koil, Periya Kovil, Koyil, and Tanjore Big Temple) over a thousand years ago; it took 4 years of construction and was dedicated in 1010 AD. Why is his statue not allowed in the temple compound and is standing on a public street further away from the view of the thousands of visitors to the temple? We are not talking about installing the statue inside the temple but within the temple compound or even in the parking area where visitors can see it. There are other structures within the outer wall. In fact, we see a statue of Raja Rajan and his queen Ko-perum-thevi in the Tiruvisalur temple. This statue was there well before there was an Indian Government. But, alas, the Indian Government would not permit the statue of this great Tamil king to be installed in the compound of the temple he built.

Almost three decades ago the Tamil Nadu State government commissioned a statue of the king and intended to place it within the outer walls of the Thanjai Big Temple. The Indian Government told the Tamil Nadu Government that it would not allow the statue inside the temple compound. So the latter placed it in a nearby street. The outcome is, the many thousands of devotees and tourists who visit the temple do not see the statue.

You may wonder why the Tamil Nadu Government has to get Indian Government's permission to install the statue of a Tamil king within the outer walls of a Tamil Temple built by the Tamil king on Tamil soil with Tamil money and labor? **Indian Government decided, without any consultation with the Tamil Nadu Government, that it would take over the major temples in Tamil Nadu.** Now nothing significant can be done without the consent of the Indian Government.

2. A Brief Biography of Raja Raja Cholan

Who is this Raja Raja Cholan (more precisely, Raja Raja Cholan-I)? Readers who are fans of the popular Tamil novelist Kalki may be familiar with his historical novel "Ponniyin Selvan". That novel is woven around the life of Raja Raja Cholan, also known as Arunmoli (Arunmozhi). Of course, much of the novel and many of the characters in it are fiction although that fiction is wrapped around historical events. What we present in this section are historical facts taken from such authoritative works as Dr. M. Rajamanickam's "Cholar Varalaru", Nilakanta Sastri's "The Cholas" and T. V. Sadasiva Pandarathar's "History of the Later Cholas".

Raja Rajan reigned between 985 AD and 1014 AD. It can be rightly said that the **Second Golden Age of Tamil Nadu** started with his reign and continued for another two centuries. (The First Golden Age of Tamil Nadu in known Tamil history was in the days of the Third Tamil Academy (Third Tamil Sangam)). He built one of the most glorious empires of South Asia that peaked during the reign of his son Rajendra Cholan - I and continued for another 200 years or so under his sons, grandsons and great grandsons. He was not only a great warrior king in the tradition of Chera Senguttuvan, Cholan Karikalan and Pandian Nedunchezhan, he was also an able administrator, a patron of the arts and a devote Saivaite Hindu.

During that period, Sinhala kings from Ilankai (now known as Sri Lanka and Ceylon) had the habit of interfering in Tamil Nadu by allying with one Tamil king against another, usually allying with Cheras or Pandias against the Cholas. (Of course, **the blame should rightly be put on those Tamil kings who invited foreign interference** and not on the Sinhala kings who made use of the opportunity.) So, after decisively defeating the Cheras and Pandias, Raja Rajan Cholan turned his attention to the Sinhalese King Mahinda-V. He assembled a naval armada and sent it to Sri Lanka. The Chola Navy defeated King Mahinda. After the military victory Raja Rajan built a Hindu temple there in Polonnaruwa.

Having defeated the enemy in the south, he moved north. The Chola army under the command of Crown Prince Rajendran marched north, all the way up to what is now Bijapur. The army defeated all who opposed its march north, including the powerful army of Chalukya King Satyasraya who ruled the Deccans.

As noted before, Raja Rajan's legacy is not just wars and conquests. He is remembered today primarily for the construction of the Tanjore Big Temple (Thanjavur Periya Kovil). The temple is also called "Rajarajeswaram" after him. This Saivaite Hindu temple is one of the most beautiful and magnificent architectural monuments in South Asia. The magnificent tower and the delicate sculptures are truly a feast for the eyes. Not only Hindus from all over the world, but also tourists from around the world visit this temple.

Though Raja Rajan was a devote Saivaite Hindu, he respected other religions. He built Vishnu temples in Mysore after he conquered the region. He not only permitted Silendra King Srimala Vijayottunga Varman to build the Buddhist shrine Chudamanivihara in Tamil Nadu at Nagapattinam, he also contributed money for its construction.

Many arts - sculpture, painting, drama, dance and music - flourished during his time. He conducted a survey of his kingdom and is considered a major achievement of that time. He divided the kingdom into a number of administrative units and appointed administrative officers for each unit. Villages were governed by local elders (a type of self-government). According to Dr. M. Rajamanickam, Raja Rajan's administrative structure is comparable to modern administrative structure seen around the world.

3. The Reason Why Raja Raja Cholan Statue is Outside Temple Grounds?

Why does the Indian Government refuse permission to install King Raja Raja Cholan's statue within the outer walls of the Thanjai Big Temple? No one is asking for installation inside the temple. Absolutely not.

Many thousands of Hindu devotees and tourists from around the world visit the Thanjai Big Temple. If Raja Rajan's statue is installed within the temple compound for all to see, they may ask the others and tour guides about him and will come to know of his conquests, his majesty and the glorious days of the Second Golden Age of Tamil Nadu. The North-Hindi controlled Indian Government does not want people to know about this glorious past and the great kings of Tamil Nadu who are second to none. Many arts - sculpture, painting, drama, dance and music - flourished during his time. He conducted a survey of his kingdom and is considered a major achievement of that time. He divided the kingdom into a number of administrative units and appointed administrative officers for each unit. Villages were governed by local elders (a type of self-government). According to Dr. M. Rajamanickam, Raja Rajan's administrative structure is comparable to modern administrative structure seen around the world.

Raja Raja Cholan is truly one of the greatest rulers in South Asian history. In my opinion, this is in fact the reason why the North-Hindi-centered Indian Government refused permission to install his statue within the outside walls of Thanjai Big Temple that he built. Let me elaborate.

3. The Reason Why Raja Raja Cholan Statue is Outside Temple Grounds?

Why does the Indian Government refuse permission to install King Raja Raja Cholan's statue within the outer walls of the Thanjai Big Temple? No one is asking for installation inside the temple. Absolutely not.

Many thousands of Hindu devotees and tourists from around the world visit the Thanjai Big Temple. If Raja Rajan's statue is installed within the temple compound for all to see, they may ask the others and tour guides about him and will come to know of his conquests, his majesty and the glorious days of the Second Golden Age of Tamil Nadu. The North-Hindi controlled Indian Government does not want people to know about this glorious past and the great kings of Tamil Nadu who are second to none. **Hindi politicians and elite want people to think that all the glorious past of Indian history is centered on the Hindi heartland of today.** They want to hide and put under a blanket

all other histories, be it that of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala or Tamil Nadu, for example.

Read the history books used at schools under the jurisdiction of the Indian Government (Central Schools and schools accredited under the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)). You will read in detail about the kings who ruled from what is today the Hindi heartland, for example, Chandra Gupta, Ashoka, Akbar, et al. But you will read very little about the Tamil kings or the Bengali kings or the Assamese kings, etc. The noted educator Dr. Arjun Dev said in 2002 that no political unit of the Deccan and South, except the Rashtrakutas, find a mention in the syllabus of Ancient India for Class XI. Even the Satavahanas, Pallavas, Chalukyas and Cholas do not find a place (The Hindu Newspaper; February 01, 2002).

In the Indian history according to the North-Hindi-centered Indian government, these lands do not have a glorious history worth mentioning although, in truth, every one of them has a rich past. Refusal to grant permission to install the statue of one of the greatest kings of South Asia is just another attempt to hide the glorious past of the Tamil people.

(NOTE: Thanjai Big Temple is also known as Brihadeeswara Temple and Rajarajeswaram.)

4. Where is Tamil in the Gangai Konda Chola Puram Temple?

Raja Raja Cholan's son Rajendra Cholan became the king of Chola Nadu (Chozha Nadu) after Raja Rajan, and he reigned between 1012 AD and 1044 AD. His military conquests were even larger than his father, of course building on the father's conquests and military. He made Chola empire one of the most powerful empires of South Asia. His conquests included Tamil kingdoms of Chera Nadu and Pandiya Nadu, rest of today's South India, and parts of or all of Bengal, Bihar, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia.

He built the Gangai Konda Chola Puram Temple, also known as Brihadisvara Temple at Gangaikondacholisvaram, is as majestic as the Thanjai Big Temple. It is also a United Nations World Heritage site. Indian Government manages this temple also and the Tamilnadu State Government has no say on the management. Indian government would not allow Tamil signs and messages in the temple grounds.

Messages posted in the Gangai Konda Chola Puram Temple are in Hindi and English only (2015). See Photo H-285 in the web page:
[<http://web.archive.org/web/20160430030845/http://hindisouth.blogspot.com/2015/10/h-0280.html>]

Tamil signs/boards are not allowed in the temple that one of the greatest Tamil kings built. How low has Tamil Nadu sunk from those glory days of the Chola Empire! Will Tamil Nadu ever regain its glory? It is in our hands, and our hands only.

5. Update

After the initial publication of the article, we heard from a reader that Indian Government disallowed the Raja Raja Cholan statue because there was an inscription at the bottom of the statue, in Tamil, that the statue was opened to public by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Thamizha Vael Doctor Kalaignar Mu. Karunanidhi.

It is not uncommon for the person (usually a politician) who opens a bridge or a major building to have his/her name inscribed in a stone plaque. In view of the historical significance of the thousand years old Thanjai Big Temple, may be such an inscription with the name of a politician is not warranted in this case. However this was not the reason given when Indian government disallowed the statue in the temple compound; the reason given was that this new Raja Rajan statue should not be placed inside the temple compound because the temple is a world heritage site; nothing was said of Chief Minister Karunanidhi's name on an inscription at the bottom of the statue.

If, in fact, the reason was Chief Minister Karunanidhi's name on the inscription, it should have been stated at that time of denial and we could have easily remedied the situation by removing the inscription. If Chief Minister Karunanidhi refused to remove his name, some other private organization could have collected the necessary funds and sculpted a statue for placement in the temple compound.

Even now it is not too late. I ask the Indian Government to publicly announce that it would allow a Raja Raja Cholan statue in the temple compound where visitors can see it. Most likely the current Tamil Nadu State government would fund such a statue or I am committing myself to collect enough donations to create a statue without any such inscription.

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6. Indian Government to Demolish Ancient Hindu Saivaite Sivan Temple in Tamil Nadu

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: June 2012; Updated: December 2013]

OUTLINE

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 2. Religious Significance
 3. Historical Significance
 4. Discussion
 - 4.1. From the Top
 - 4.2 Ignorance of and Indifference to Religious Sentiments outside the Hindi Belt
 - 4.3 Ignorance and Negative Attitudes to Tamil History
 5. Final Comments
- Update

1. Introduction

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has recently marked for demolition an ancient Hindu temple in Tamilnadu in order to widen the Vikkiravandi –Thanjavur National Highway. This Tirupuravar Panankateesvarar Temple is located in Panaiyapuram village, Villupuram District. This Saivaite Temple for Lord Sivan (Siva, Shiva) is 1,300-years old.

We present the importance of this temple in the next two sections and discuss why the Indian Government controlled National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has no hesitation to demolish such a significant religious and historical landmark in Tamilnadu.

2. Religious Significance

The Tirupuravar Panankateesvarar Temple of Panaiyapuram village is 1300 years old, one of the oldest temples in Tamilnadu. Poet-Saint Tirugnana Sambandar sang about this Saivaite Hindu temple, dedicated to Lord Siva (Sivan, Shiva). Tirugnana Sambandar is a key figure in the history of Hinduism in Tamil Nadu. He is one of the sixty-three Nayanars, Tamil Saiva Bhakti saints who lived between the sixth and the tenth centuries. The fact that Sambandar sang about this temple makes it special in the eyes of Tamil Hindus. Sambandar lived in the seventh century at which time Jainism was widely followed in Tamil Nadu. Tirugnana Sambandar was one of those who played a major role in reviving Hinduism in Tamil Nadu. He was a stalwart of Saivaite Bhakti Movement and three hundred and eighty four of his poems are included in Tirumurai, a compendium of songs in the praise of Siva considered an important work in Tamil literature. Thus the

Tirupuravar Panankateesvarar Temple of Panaiyapuram is an important temple worth protecting.

A little interesting note: Siva, the reigning deity of this temple, is also called Panankateesvarar here because the area is full of palmyra trees (a type of tall palm trees). The Tamil phrase panankkaatu means palmyra trees jungle. So Panankateesvarar means god of the palmyra tree jungle.

Another interesting note: The temple is constructed such that sun rays fall on the Siva statue in the temple sanctum on the first day of the Tamil month Chiththirai, an auspicious day in Hindu calendar.

3. Historical Significance

In addition to the religious importance, the temple has also historical significance. The temple has a number of inscriptions belonging to some important kings who reigned during one of the most glorious periods of Tamil Nadu--years of the Imperial Chola Dynasty-- and the Pandya dynasty that followed it for a brief time. Inscriptions in this temple include those from Chola kings Rajendra Cholan I, Rajendra Cholan II, Adhi Rajendra Cholan, and Kulotunga Cholan, and from the Pandyan kings Sundara Pandyan I and Vikrama Pandyan. Some of these inscriptions are about a thousand years old and other go back to about 700 years (range from around 1020 CE to 1300 CE).

These kings are among the most notable rulers of Tamil Nadu and key figures in the history of Tamilnadu. Years of the Imperial Chola Dynasty were one of the most glorious periods in the history of Tamil Nadu. Tamils were at one of their military peaks. Chola army defeated kings who ruled parts of today's South India, North India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Maldives. Among South Asian kings, only Cholas had mighty enough navies to conquer overseas kingdoms. Cholas also had extensive trade overseas. They traded from Baghdad to China. Chinese records show that Cholas had an embassy in China around 1077.

We shall not allow inscriptions from this golden era be destroyed or relocated to widen a highway. This is our heritage, this is our history. Hindi dominated Indian government may not have any interest in preserving the remnants of Tamil Nadu history or may even want to destroy them to project their ancestral history as the history of India, but we the people of Tamil Nadu have an interest in preserving our historical sites and shall protest their destruction or relocation.

4. Discussion

4.1. From the Top

Why is the Indian Government agency National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) bent on demolishing this temple instead of re-routing the highway? Cost of re-routing is

minimal compared to the religious and historical significance of the Thirupuravar Panankatesvarar Temple.

You have to understand who calls the shots at the helms of power at the Indian Government. Hindi politicians set the general directions and tone of the policies and actions of the Indian government. The Prime Minister, ministers and Indian central government employees follow this general direction or they would be removed or sidelined. I had given several examples of the political supremacy of Hindi belt politicians in the article "Who Rules India?" in my book "Hindi Imposition Papers - Volume 1". With this in mind, let us discuss the plan to demolish this ancient Saivate temple in Tamil Nadu.

4.2 Ignorance of and Indifference to Religious Sentiments outside the Hindi Belt

Most Hindi people, including the politicians, have scant knowledge of most Hindu religious sites outside the Hindi belt unless Hindi Hindus have some emotional relationship or attachment to it. Many Hindi-belt Hindus and thus their politicians know of Tamil Nadu's Rameshwaram because it has connections to the Hindu epic Ramayanam which was centered in the north. On the contrary this ancient Tirupuravar Panankatesvarar Temple has no ties as such to Hindi belt, although it is dedicated Lord Siva. Very few Hindi people, if any, have heard of Poet-Saint Tirugnana Sambandar, Nayanmars or Tirumurai. So the very fact that he visited this temple and sang about it means nothing to them although Sambandar played a key role at a critical juncture in Hinduism in Tamilnadu. Ignorance and indifference are the reasons for the planned demolition Thirupuravar Panankatesvarar Temple of Panaiyapuram village. It seems that in the eyes of Hindi politicians Tamil Nadu Hindus are children of lesser gods and their religious sites are unimportant.

This is why we want major and minor decision about Tamilnadu be made by Tamil Nadu government and NOT the Indian government. But more and more decision-making power is taken away from the state government and concentrated with the Indian (central or union) government.

4.3 Ignorance and Negative Attitudes to Tamil History

As we stated in Section 3, the Thirupuravar Panankatesvarar Temple also has historical significance to Tamil Nadu. Again, most Hindi people, including the politicians, know very little about Tamil Nadu history (or, for that matter, history of the South or Eastern India). History books endorsed by Indian government controlled National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) have very little information on south Indian history. So Hindi people seem to think that all of Indian history revolve around Hindi lands and others do not have a rich history or heritage. Because of this lop-sided attitude towards South Indian history, even the Twenty Ninth All-India Conference of Dravidian Linguistics (February 2002) passed a resolution urging the Government of India to give South India its rightful and legitimate share in history books. So Chola inscriptions of a

time when "Tamil glory" was at a peak do not mean anything to Hindi people or politicians.

Also, there is a definite move on the part of the Indian Government to cover up the glorious past of South and East India and only propagate the history of the Hindi belt region. The case of history books endorsed by Indian government controlled the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) have very little information on south Indian history is one example. Another example is that of Indian Government's refusal to allow a Raja Raja Cholan statue in the Tanjore Big Temple (Tanjavoor Periya Kovil) compound or near the entrance to the compound (Tamil Nadu government did not want to install it in the temple but only on the temple grounds outside the temple). By the way, Raja Raja Cholan was the one who built the Big Temple. It is discussed in detail in the article "Why is Emperor Raja Raja Cholan Standing outside the Thanjai Big Temple?" [Chapter 5 of this book] and will not be repeated here. We refer readers to Reference 1 for more Indian Government attempts to hide and bury Tamil Nadu history.

Ignorance and attempts to hide the history of Tamil Nadu reasons for the planned demolition Thirupuravar Panankateesvarar Temple of Panaiyapuram village. This is why we want major and minor decision about Tamil Nadu be made by Tamil Nadu government and NOT the Indian government. Let us manage our own affairs.

5. Final Comments

Need for decision making by the Tamil Nadu government, instead of the Indian government, has been noticed at the highest levels in Tamilnadu. Here is a quote from Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's speech on April 16, 2012.

"There can be no uniform pattern in policing in the country as each State has its own **distinct cultural, communal, social and economic aspects**." [Though the Chief Minister made this statement in relation to police powers, this view is equally applicable to decisions such as demolishing religious site important to Tamil Nadu and other matters also.]

Unless Tamil Nadu government is given the power to make decisions on relevant matters, more heritage sites would be destroyed intentionally or because of ignorance, and Tamil Nadu history would be forgotten in couple of more centuries in Indian rule.

Update

After the initial publication of this article in June 2012, something happened in October 2012. Here it is.

Local people have been protesting the demolition of the temple since early 2012. Protests continued and villagers petitioned the Villupuram Collector, NHAI officials and Indian government ministers. According to The Hindu newspaper (January 22, 2013), "The State government's land acquisition officer feared the issue would lead to a law and order

problem"; that is, the protests may turn violent. Finally NHAI relented, and issued a letter on October 6, 2012 saying that it would acquire land only up to the existing compound wall of the temple and thus averting the temple demolition.

While we are happy that this historical Tamil Nadu temple would not be demolished, we have to ask the **question** why did this Indian Government agency NHAI did not know of the importance of this religious site, and why did it not change its decision when its importance was brought to its attention, why only the warning of a potentially violent protest spared the temple? So much energy, money and hours of work over a period of some six months were spent to save the temple from NHAI bulldozers?

If the **decision making power** rests with the Tamil Nadu government, instead of the far-away Indian government that has no affinity to Tamil Nadu, there would have been no demolition order at all because we know our religious, cultural, historical, social and economic aspects. (See Section 4 of the article for a detailed discussion of this aspect.)

Reference

1. "Tamil Nadu (India): Historical Perspectives, Distortions and Blackouts" (edited by Thanjai Nalankilli), Free e-book available on the Internet where you downloaded this book.

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7.

Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable TV and the Indian Government

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: February 2016]

Tamil Nadu State Government-owned Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable TV Corporation Limited (TNACTCL) that distributes television (TV) signals in 31 districts in Tamilnadu for the past many years. TNACTCL has been asking Government of India Ministry of Information and Broadcasting license to distribute digital TV signals since 2012 (DAS - Digital Addressable System; this is a newer, better technology. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is yet to make a decision as of December 2015, although it has granted provisional licenses to 326 other companies that requested license after TNACTCL's request. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and members of parliament (MP) from Tamil Nadu have also asked the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to grant license to TNACTCL and nothing has happened. Then, in 2015, the Indian Government told TNACTCL that TV signals distributed to larger cities such as Chennai will have to be digitized by December 31, 2015 or the TV signals of TNACTCL will be disconnected (The New Indian Express; December 22, 2015); in other words TNACTCL will not be able to serve the people in the larger cities. Result would be increased cable TV charges for consumers because prices may go up without the competition from state government owned TNACTCL. Eventually in December 2015 Madras High Court asked Indian government to allow TATCV to continue its distribution of TV signals. Why do we have to waste time and money to go to courts to correct Indian Government's misdeeds?

Let us look at the situation. Tamil Nadu state government owned TNACTCL applies for license to distribute digital TV signals in 2012, Indian government does not grant the license even after 3 years (although it granted provisional license to 326 other cable companies that applied for license after Tamil Nadu government applied), then it is going to stop Tamil Nadu government's TNACTCL in the larger cities because TNACTCL is not distributing digital signals. Indian government is yet to give a reason for the 3 years delay. It seems that the Indian Government Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is determined to stop Tamil Nadu government from distributing TV signals to Chennai and other large cities by delaying license to TNACTCL and permitting only private companies. As the December 31, 2015 deadline was approaching TNACTCL asked Madras High Court to prevent the Indian government from disconnecting its TV signals in Chennai and other cities. When the petition was heard in December 2015, Indian government lawyers told the court that they need more time to respond. Judges postponed the case to early January 2016 and asked the Indian government to allow TNACTCL to continue its distribution of TV signals as before (The New Indian Express; December 22, 2015).

We want to point out that Indian government operates large number of Television Channels through Doordharsan all over India but state governments are not allowed to

broadcast TV. Now it is trying to stop Tamil Nadu government from even distributing cable TV signals through delaying tactics. It is unfair, unjust and discriminatory.

In a country like India where most states are countries in themselves with distinct languages and cultures, television (over-the-air broadcasts, cable and satellite) should be under state governments and not the Indian government. Otherwise arbitrary, high-handed actions by the Indian government will happen. We suggest that radio and television be moved from under the Indian central government to both state and central governments.

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8.

India Delays Ennore LNG Project Costing Millions to Tamil Nadu State

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: November 2016]

In the late 1990s, Indian Government Union Ministry of Surface Transport delayed for years the approval of an integrated Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal and 2,000 MW power plant project at Ennore, Tamil Nadu. Several requests from Tamil Nadu State Government to Indian Government Surface Transport Ministry did not get the necessary approval. Delay continued. So Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Karunanidhi wrote to Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee on September 1, 1998 telling him that "lack of response (about the delay) was disconcerting" and informed him that the delay would impose "enormous financial risks on the State Government" (The Hindu; September 4, 1998). The project was funded by the Tamil Nadu government (not a cent from the Indian government). All that Tamilnadu wanted was approval on a timely fashion without delay. Yet the Indian government delayed and delayed the project costing the people of Tamil Nadu money.

This is why we want that approval of power plants and other projects benefiting the people of Tamil Nadu should be up to the state government. Approval of infrastructure and industrial facilities with state government funds or private investments should be state responsibility; we do not see a need for Indian government approval. Our elected state government knows what is good for us. We do not need the approval from Indian government over a thousand kilometres away.

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